

**Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center**

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Situation Report for August 14, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. Montana Fire Conditions and Background Information:

The Northwest Area Command continues to make progress on containment of wildfires in their area of the state. Developments in the Missoula Area have necessitated the creation of two separate area commands. The Commands consist of the 93 East Area Command and the 93 West Area Command. Fire behavior has been Very Active to Extreme in most areas west of the divide and in South Central to Southwestern Montana due to continued warm, dry, and windy conditions. Record high temperatures are forecast for Central and Eastern Montana for the next few days.

II. Current Montana Fire Situation: (as reported to NRCG August 14, 2003 (0045))

A. Large Fires

*Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 5
National Preparedness Level = 5*

- **93 East Area Command (Ribar) will be managing the following fires:**
 - ***Dirty Ike – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman) - 1,200 acres, 0% contained, 3 miles NE of Clinton, Montana.***
 - ***Boles/Rattlesnake Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Hoff) – 12,500 acres, 5% contained, 15-20 miles NE of Missoula, Montana.***
 - ***Twin Lakes – 120 acres, 10% contained, 4 miles S of Georgetown Lake, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (McElwain) has been ordered.***
 - ***Cooney Ridge Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Sandman) - 7,000 acres, 5 % contained, 11 miles E of Florence, Montana.***
 - ***Gold 1 – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Philbin) - 4,000 acres, 0% contained, 9 miles NE of Corvallis, Montana.***
- **93 West Area Command (Greenhoe) will be managing the following fires:**
 - ***Black Mountain 2 – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Dietrich) – 525 acres, 0% contained, 9 miles W of Missoula, Montana.***
 - ***Cherry Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Swope) – 3,700 acres, 10% contained, 12 miles SE of Thompson Falls, MT.***
 - ***Fish Creek Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Benes) - 6,500 acres, 0% contained, 24 miles W of Missoula, Montana. This complex consists of 8 fires.***
 - ***North Howard Complex – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Kechter) - 1,375 acres, 5% contained, 16 miles W of Missoula, Montana. This complex consists of North Howard and East Fork Petty Creek fire.***
- ***Beaver Lake Complex – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Frye) - 4,400 acres, 5% contained, 19 miles SW of Missoula, Montana.***
- ***Slims Complex – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Mortier) - 11,650 acres, 65% contained, 35 miles E of Grangeville, Idaho. This complex consists of the Slims fire (11,000 acres and the Poet Branch fire (650 acres).***
- ***Flathead Area Command (Mann) is managing the following large fires:***

- Crazy Horse – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Vail) - 7,000 acres, 0% contained, 10 miles NE of St. Ignatius, Montana.
- Robert – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Ferguson) - 38,740 acres, 60% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana.
- Wedge Canyon – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Hart) - 31,890 acres, 70% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.
- Trapper Creek Complex – Complex is 22,105 acres, 65% contained. This Complex is made up of the Trapper Creek (16,411 acres – 65% contained), Trout (1/4 acre – 100% contained) and the Paul Bunyan (300 acres – 100% contained), Wolf Gun (5,694 acres – 55% contained). This complex is located 45 miles NE of Kalispell, Montana.
- Little Salmon Creek Complex – Fire Use Management Team (Rath). This 18,342 acre lightning caused Wildland Fire Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex is made up of 15 fires; 4 fires are larger than 10 acres – Little Salmon (17,690 acres), Lime Cr. (126 acres), Pagoda (153 acres) and Some Creek (355 acres).
- Rough Draw – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Whitney) - 725 acres, 10% contained, 8 miles S of Livingston, Montana.
East – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Gardner) has been ordered, 2,911 acres, 0% contained, 10 miles E of Fishing Bridge Junction, Yellowstone National Park.
- Windmill Complex – Type 2 Team Incident Management Team (Szczepanik) has been ordered, 1,000 acres, 0% contained, 17 miles E of Hardin, Montana.
- Moon Creek – 3,000 acres, 10% contained, 15 miles SW of Miles City, Montana.
- Hobble – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Larsen) - 34,000 acres, 70% contained, 6 miles E of Greycliff, Montana.
- Winslow – 800 acres, 0% contained, 5 miles SW of Lakeview, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team has been ordered.
- Bronc – 264 acres, 0% contained, 19 miles W of Hamilton, Montana. This will be the last report unless significant growth occurs.
- Graveyard – 25 miles SW of Miles City, Montana, 650 acres, 50% contained.
- Little Hawk – 5,500 acres, 0% contained, 10 miles N of Busby, Montana.
- Rough Creek – 1,000 acres, 60% contained, 6 miles W of Broadus, Montana.
- Wrangler – 600 acres, 90% contained, 6 miles W of Broadus, Montana.
- Brushy Spoon – 311 acres, 24 miles W of Darby, Montana. This wildland fire use fire is being managed for resource benefit.
- West Moose – 158 acres, 0% contained, 38 miles W of Hamilton, Montana. This wildland fire use fire is being managed for resource benefit.
- Cow Creek – 1,000 acres, 100% contained, 40 miles SW of Miles City, Montana.

Reported Major Fire Activity: **Report Date: August 14th, 2003**

| <u>FIRE NAME</u> | <u>% Contain</u> | <u>Total Cost-to-Date</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| TWIN LAKES | 10% | \$NR |
| COONEY RIDGE COMPLEX | 5% | \$150,000 |
| DIRTY IKE | 0% | \$150,000 |
| GOLD 1 | 0% | \$150,000 |
| BOLES/RATTLESNAKE COMPLEX | 5% | \$515,000 |
| CHERRY CREEK COMPLEX | 10% | \$1,469,400 |
| BLACK MOUNTAIN 2 | 0% | \$210,000 |
| FISH CREEK | 0% | \$395,000 |
| NORTH HOWARD COMPLEX | 5% | \$524,758 |
| BEAVERHEAD LAKE COMPLEX | 5% | \$1,000,000 |
| WEDGE CANYON | 70% | \$20,300 |
| TRAPPER CREEK COMPLEX | 65% | \$3,271,027 |
| SALMON CREEK COMPLEX | NR% | \$879,000 |
| CRAZY HORSE | NR% | \$NR |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| ROBERT | 60% | \$13,758,437 |
| ROUGH DRAW | 10% | \$616,000 |
| EAST FIRE | 20% | \$NR |
| WINDMILL COMPLEX | NR% | \$NR |
| MOON CREEK | 50% | \$NR |
| HOBBLE FIRE | 70% | \$981,000 |
| WINSLOW FIRE | 0% | \$100,000 |
| COW CREEK | 100% | \$NR |
| ROUGH CREEK | 60% | \$NR |
| WRANGLER | 90% | \$NR |
| LITTLE HAWK | 0% | \$NR |
| GRANITE | NR% | \$5,000 |
| COVE | NR% | \$250 |
| BRUSHY SPOON | NR% | \$250 |
| BRONC | NR% | \$500 |
| WEST MOOSE | NR% | \$NR |
| GRAVEYARD | 100% | \$NR |

B. Initial Attack *Moderate initial attack – 64 new fires for 32,690 acres*

C. State Forecast For Montana

STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE GREAT FALLS MT
435 AM MDT THU AUG 14 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today - Mostly Sunny. Areas Of Smoke. Highs 89 To 99.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Lows 49 To 59.

Friday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs 89 To 99.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - Mostly Sunny. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon South. Highs In The Mid 80s To Mid 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy In The Evening Then Clearing. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Evening. Lows In The Mid 50s To Mid 60s.

Friday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon West And South. Highs In The 90s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - Mostly Sunny. Areas Of Smoke. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Lower 80s To Lower 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Areas Of Smoke. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Evening. Lows In The Mid 50s.

Friday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Lower 80s To Mid 90s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - Hot. Partly Cloudy With A Slight Chance Of Thunderstorms West. Mostly Sunny Elsewhere. Highs 95 To 105.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy With A Slight Chance Of Evening Thunderstorms West. Mostly Clear Elsewhere. Lows Ranging From The Mid 50s West To The Upper 60s East.

Friday - Continued Hot. Partly Cloudy With A Slight Chance Of Thunderstorms West. Mostly Sunny Elsewhere. Highs 95 To 105.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuations of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

| <u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u> | | <u>Date Filed</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cascade County | Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.) | 7/15/03 |
| Garfield County | Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks) | 7/15/03 |
| Beaverhead County | Emergency Resolution (multiple fires) | 7/17/03 |
| Ravalli County | Emergency Declaration (Big Creek) | 7/20/03 |
| Flathead County | Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon) | 7/21/03 |
| Sanders County | Resolution (Stage II Fire Restrictions) | 7/29/03 |
| Fallon County | Resolution (Stage I Fire Restrictions) | 8/04/03 |
| CSKT Flathead | Resolution (Tribal/Forest/Range Closure) | 8/04/03 |
| Blaine County | Emergency Declaration (150 acre fire) | 8/06/03 |
| Park County | Emergency Declaration (Rough Draw Fire) | 8/11/03 |
| Sweet Grass County | Disaster Declaration – (Hobble [Diamond] Fire) | 8/12/03 |
| Custer County | Emergency Declaration | 8/13/03 |
| Musselshell County | Emergency Declaration | 8/13/03 |

The Flathead County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution on August 4th, 2003 stating that because the weather forecasts indicated no relief from the dry conditions and fires continued in the county it was “resolved that stage II fire restrictions on all State forested lands and all private forested lands open to the public” will be in effect until otherwise stated.

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State Declarations:

On 8/07/03, Governor Judy Martz signed Executive Order # 16-03 in which she declared a statewide disaster thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana’s citizens. This declaration supplements Executive Order # 14-03, a statewide emergency declaration issued on 7/18/03.

FEMA Declarations:

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant approved on July 23rd, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant approved on July 25th, 2003 for Flathead County’s Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant approved on August 11th, 2003 for the Hobble Fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Grant approved on August 13th, 2003 for a number of fires burning in Missoula and Ravalli counties, as well as the Cherry Creek Fire in Sanders County and Mineral County.

Requests for State Assistance:

- The Montana National Guard is assisting “initial attack” fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and one UH-1 Helicopter module and approximately 45 soldiers. One Blackhawk helicopter module is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula. The UH-1 helicopter module is currently deployed to Billings. The Montana National Guard Personnel Resources currently allocated to wild land fire suppression duties stands at 45. The National Guard will be rotating in new air crews in Helena and Kalispell this weekend.

- One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.

- MT Highway Patrol and MT Department of Transportation are supporting fire efforts with local jurisdictions and fire management to limit travel disturbances.
- Park County Commissioners issued a written request for State Assistance for a wildland fire (Roughdraw) that started August 10th, 2003.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is currently operating at Activation Level III. Level III operations will include a full staff 0700-1900 daily.
- Currently DES Agency Representatives are assigned to:
 Missoula Area Command
 Sweetgrass County (Hobble Fire)
 Northwest Area Command Joint Information Center

The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1900-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

Addendums to Situation Report

As of: **August 14th, 2003**

General Fire Information and Severity to Date

- *Firefighting resources are being stretched thin across the state. Key personnel and equipment are now beginning to be redirected from some initial attack duties to more community and asset protection oriented duties.*
- *Missoula Area command has been split into two separate commands. The names of these commands are 93 East Area Command and the 93 West Area Command.*
- *Large Season ending storm not expected until mid-September or early October.*
- *Closures are likely to remain in effect for the remainder of the season.*
- *Plum Creek has closed all private and public use on their holdings, logging operations are also shut down.*
- *Currently there are no overnight facilities at Apgar or West Glacier.*
- *Most smoke is aloft, but MODERATE levels of smoke have reached the surface in Havre, Bozeman and Lewistown. Most of eastern Montana will see a few hours of MODERATE levels. It is still very smoky in Glacier Park and the north Flathead Valley. Concentrations in West Glacier are at VERY UNHEALTHY levels. Concentrations in Columbia Falls are at UNHEALTHY levels as of 8AM. There is also a lot of smoke trapped in the Missoula and Bitterroot Valleys. Concentrations in Missoula and Stevensville are at UNHEALTHY levels this morning. It is very smoky in Butte, Helena and Dillon as well as the rest of Southwest Montana with levels at UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE INDIVIDUALS this morning. As the smoke mixes down to the surface later these morning, areas under the thickest plumes could see very high levels of particulate. Smoke conditions downwind of the fires is expected to be UNHEALTHY or worse.*
- *The Crazy Horse fire has residents in Kraft Creek under mandatory evacuation. Residents in Glacier Creek, Guest Ranch Road, Jette Road, and Swanland are being asked to voluntarily evacuate. Mandatory evacuation was issued to one residence at Stoner Lake, however no structures were lost. Residents in Pine Ridge Road are being alerted to the potential threat.*
- *Two major power lines were damaged Monday by the Hobble fire burning between Big Timber and Reed Point. The fire destroyed at least 21 support structures on a 230-kilovolt line and 26 support structures on a 161-kilovolt line. Both lines stretch between Livingston and Billings. This indirectly caused power outages Monday for several thousand customers.*
- *The Northern Rockies Information Center Toll Free Fire Information Number has been activated and is available to handle any of a tremendous number of questions and concerns about large fires burning in northern Idaho and western Montana area. The number has been established to provide a single point of contact on general fire information for the general public. The Northern Rockies Information Center Toll Free Fire Information Number is 1-800-781-2811.*
- *The Rough Draw Complex in Park County forced the evacuation of 50-60 people, the majority of whom were guests at the 63 Ranch. In addition, the Slippery Rock fire, another part of the Rough Draw*

Complex, forced the evacuation of another 14 homes yesterday.

Fire Restrictions and Closures

| <u>Zone</u> | <u>Restrictions</u> | <u>Effective Date</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Northwestern Zone | Stage II Restrictions | July 28, 2003 |
| Southwestern Zone | Stage II Restrictions | July 28, 2003 |
| Central Montana Zone | Stage II Restrictions | July 28, 2003 |
| South Central Zone | Stage II Restrictions | July 28, 2003 |
| Eastern Montana Zone | | |
| <u>Stage I Restrictions (Billings)</u> | | July 18, 2003 |
| <u>Stage II Restrictions</u> | | |
| State & Private: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell | | July 25, 2003 |
| Federal: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell | | July 18, 2003 |
| <u>Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown)</u> | | July 21, 2003 |
| <u>Stage II Restrictions</u> | | |
| State & Private: Hill, Chouteau, Judith Basin, Petroleum, Blaine, Phillips, Valley, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Fergus, Golden Valley, Daniels | | July 21, 2003 |
| Federal: Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland | | July 25, 2003 |
| <u>Stage I Restrictions (Miles City)</u> | | August 04, 2003 |
| State & Private: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud | | |
| Federal: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield, Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud counties | | |

Closures: Information is current as of 08-14-03

Southwest

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest:

Fires and fire fighting have caused several road, trail, and campground closings in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Closed roads include # 81 Anderson Mountain Road, west of Wisdom, off Highway 43. Note: The Gibbonsville and Foothills roads, west of Wisdom, are both open now. The Gibbonsville road is open on both sides of the state line.

Bitterroot National Forest:

The Ravalli County Sheriff's Office is contacting area residents just north of the Gold Creek campground and up to the Middle Burnt Fork Road to advise them of the current situation. This is a Stage 1 Alert NOT an evacuation. Public access along the Lost Horse Road beginning at the junction of the Lick Creek Road is temporarily closed due to the current fire activity.

Gallatin National Forest

There is a mandatory closure for all recreation areas south of Aspen Campground on Main Boulder Road. Voluntary evacuations are in effect in the Main Boulder Drainage. Bruffie Lane closed. Forest Service closures include Suce, Mission Creek, Livingston Peak, Blacktail Creek, Rough Draw Trails and a portion of Davis Creek Trail.

Northwest

Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park:

The temporary evacuation of the Apgar Village area was conducted as a precaution on Monday August 11th. Due to heavy smoke and to facilitate fire-fighting efforts the Going-To-The Sun Road is temporarily closed from Apgar to Logan Pass, a distance of 18 miles. The North Fork Road remains closed from Glacier Rim to the Canadian boarder. The west entrance will be closed at the West Glacier bridge over the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. Sperry Chalet is being evacuated as a precaution in the event of extreme fire behavior. The area north from Lake McDonald and west of the Continental Divide is temporarily closed.

Lolo National Forest

The Sanders County commissioners have issued an evacuation warning for residents in the Eddy Creek Area. In addition the following closures are in effect: Fish Creek Road, Forest Service Road (FSR)343, from Big Pine Point of Interest to the south at the junction with West Fork Fish Creek Wagon Mountain Road, FSR 33, from the junction with Howard Creek, FSR 238, to the east at the junction with Petty Creek Road. The closure will include the following roads on the Plains/Thompson Falls RD: 352, 7614, 7672, 420, 16261, 7600, 7579, 18281, 7581, 18259, 16597, 7583, 17345, 7584,

7585, 7589, 16386, 217, 7581, and 769. Residents and cabin owners in the Fish Creek and Thompson Creek drainages are advised to be alert to possible evacuation notices. The North Howard is also about two miles from structures on private land in the upper Petty Creek drainage and the Graves Creek Area, where the Frenchtown Rural Fire Department has advised residents to be prepared to evacuate. Structure protection plans are in place.